

FEB 04 '98
JOHN BREAU
LOUISIANA

12:19PM SENATOR BREAU

Docket # CC 97-231

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1803

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CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

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Andre

February 2, 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable William Kennard, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Commission will very soon make a decision on whether BellSouth's request to offer long distance service from Louisiana will be granted. I've been asked to forward to you the attached petition signed by 1,100 current and retired BellSouth employees and their families urging the Commission to grant this request. I also want to take this opportunity to offer a few thoughts.

I was heartened to hear recent comments by the Commission about its own frustration with the current section 271 process and its desire to find new ways to make the process work better. When we passed the Telecommunications Act two years ago, few of us envisioned that today we would still have artificially separated local and long distance telephone industries.

Part of the problem may have been an unrealistic expectation of the extent to which incumbent local exchange carriers would genuinely be able, or could adequately be forced, to give up market share. Additionally, however, I don't believe we are focusing enough attention on the promotion of new technologies and new competitors as a means to achieve the desired competition in the local exchange.

In fact, U.S. telecommunications policy appears trapped in an increasingly outdated competition model. As part of a greater information technology sector, where product life cycles last only six months and the cost of transmitting voice and data has little to do with distance and more to do with bandwidth, we seem to be wasting an inordinate amount of time and money requiring a certain type of competition by certain competitors within a certain time frame.

I want the people of Louisiana to have not only a choice of local and long distance telephone companies, but more importantly, a choice of benefits from among competing information technology providers.

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I respectfully urge you to provide a written record outlining your analysis of BellSouth's long distance application, especially as it relates to whether a PCS provider can serve as a "facilities based competitor" for purposes of Track A. I urge you to make a decision on the application that will expedite the reality of a competitive marketplace for Louisiana. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Breaux".

JOHN BREAUX
United States Senator

JB/mja

cc: Honorable Susan Ness
Honorable Michael Powell
Honorable Harold Furchgott-Roth
Honorable Gloria Tristani

UNITED STATES
SENATOR JOHN BREAUX
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RE: JB 271 letter

PLEASE DELIVER THIS INFORMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
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